



Courts

To serve the public through support of the judicial system of Loudoun County by providing an independent, accessible, and responsive forum for the just resolution of disputes. Both the State Constitution and the Code of Virginia require the County to provide suitable facilities for the courts (which include the Circuit Court, the General District Court, and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court) and the Magistrates. While the County is not required to provide any personnel or related expenses, Loudoun County does provide employees for the Circuit Court. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides the employees to staff the General District Court, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, and the Magistrates Office. The Commonwealth also provides the judges for the courts.

Department Programs

Circuit Court

The Circuit Court is the trial court with the broadest powers in Virginia and has the authority to try a full range of both civil and criminal cases. Civil cases involve disputes between two or more parties; criminal cases are controversies between the Commonwealth and persons accused of a crime. Only in a Circuit Court is a jury provided for the trial of many of these disputes and controversies. The Circuit Court has appellate jurisdiction over all appeals from the General District Court and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Appeals are heard de novo; that is, the cases are tried from the beginning as though there had been no prior trial. The General District Court has exclusive authority to hear civil cases with claims of \$4,500 or less; and shares authority with the Circuit Court to hear cases with claims between \$4,500 and \$25,000, and up to \$50,000 in civil cases for personal injury and wrongful death. The Circuit Court tries civil cases involving divorces, wills and estates, contracts, real property, administrative determinations, felonies, and indicted misdemeanors.

General District Court

Hears traffic violation cases, misdemeanor criminal cases, and preliminary hearing matters on felony cases. The General District Court also hears landlord and tenant disputes, contract disputes, and personal injury actions. The General District Court does not conduct jury trials. All cases in this Court are heard by a judge. The General District Court is also involved in civil commitments including involuntary admissions of mentally ill/intellectual disability and medical emergency temporary detention. The General District Court promotes community relations and community service programs through the Mental Health Docket and the Veterans Treatment Docket.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Hears cases involving juvenile delinquency matters to include traffic, misdemeanor, and felony charges; juvenile involuntary commitments and protective orders; all civil matters for any person under the age of 18; all adult domestic-related misdemeanor and felony charges; domestic-related protective orders and all civil matters pertaining to child support/spousal support; and all juvenile Department of Family Services (DFS) cases.

Magistrates

Conducts probable cause and bail hearings; commits and releases offenders to and from jail; and issues warrants, emergency custody orders, temporary detention orders, medical emergency detention orders, and emergency protective orders.

**Courts****Financial Information****FY 2024 Adopted Information¹**

	Expenditures	Revenue	LTF	FTE
Circuit Court	\$1,761,883	\$0	\$1,761,883	12.00
General District Court	338,802	4,000	334,802	0.00
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court	137,777	0	137,777	0.00
Magistrates	48,847	0	48,847	0.00
Total	\$2,287,309	\$4,000	\$2,283,309	12.00

¹ Sums may not equal due to rounding.



Courts: Circuit Court

Circuit Court

What We Do: All residents of the community are served by the Circuit Court, which is a state court with five sitting Loudoun Circuit Court judges appointed by the Virginia General Assembly for eight-year terms. Loudoun is part of the 20th Judicial Circuit (also part of the 20th Judicial *District*, for the District Courts), which also includes Fauquier County and Rappahannock County. All judges in the 20th Judicial Circuit may be called upon to sit in any county court in the Circuit. In FY 2020, the 20th Judicial Circuit received funding from the state for a fifth judge. The state provided the funding to fill that position, which had been vacant since January 2017.

In civil cases, the Circuit Court has concurrent jurisdiction with the General District Court over claims between \$4,500 and \$25,000, and exclusive original jurisdiction over almost all claims exceeding \$25,000. The Circuit Court also has jurisdiction over divorce cases, adoptions, garnishments, disputes concerning wills and estates, controversies involving real property, and concealed handgun permit applications. In criminal cases, the Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the trial of all felonies (offenses that may be punished by commitment to the state penitentiary) and of those misdemeanors (offenses carrying a penalty of not more than 12 months in jail) on appeal from the General District Court or originally charged in the Circuit Court. The Circuit Court also has jurisdiction over juveniles aged 14 years and older who are charged with felonies and whose cases have been certified or transferred by the judge of a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for trial in the Circuit Court.

The Circuit Court has appellate jurisdiction over all appeals from the General District Court and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Appeals from these District Courts are heard *de novo* – that is, the cases are tried from the beginning as though there had been no prior trial. Only in a Circuit Court is a jury provided for the trial of many of these disputes and controversies. The Circuit Court has the authority to impanel regular, special, and multi-jurisdictional grand juries.

The Adult Drug Court is a cooperative effort involving the Circuit Court; the Clerk of the Circuit Court; the Department of Community Corrections; the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney; County Administration; the Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Developmental Services (MHSADS); the Public Defender's Office; and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). This Specialty Docket of the Circuit Court assists those in the criminal justice system with substance use issues.

Mandate Information: By the Code of Virginia § 15.2-1638, localities must provide suitable court facilities, but the judiciary is responsible for administering the facilities. The County provides maintenance of the grounds that surround court facilities.

Who Does It: County staff supports the Circuit Court bench, including four staff attorneys, five legal services specialists, two docket managers, and a chief of staff. In addition to the personnel expenditures for staff, the County provides funding for operational items such as staff development, books, and office supplies. The Commonwealth of Virginia funds the judges' personnel expenditures since they are state employees. The Circuit Court Judges Office has no other staff. As required by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the County provides the facilities for the Circuit Court.

Why We Do It: Services provided by the Circuit Court (as the only court of record¹ in the Commonwealth with land records, deeds, marriage licenses, judgments, and wills) are an important component of the state's judicial system in Loudoun County. The Circuit Court provides the community access to the legal system to resolve civil and criminal disputes.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: Current service level includes 3,566 civil cases and 1,557 criminal cases filed per year. While the number of civil cases continues to rise, the number of criminal cases has diminished, from a total of 3,185 in FY 2019 to 1,661 in FY 2021 and 1,557 in FY 2022. Chambers staff processed 9,940 daily orders in FY 2022 and scheduled 3,236 cases. Staff attorneys wrote 339 legal memoranda for the judges. The Board of Supervisors approved the reimplementing of an Adult Drug Court in FY 2019 after the last program ended in FY 2013. At current service level, the

¹ Being a court of record means that appeals to the Circuit Court from the General District Court and the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court are heard as new trials.

**Courts: Circuit Court**

Adult Drug Court is offered to a maximum capacity of 50 participants. Use of substitute judges to assist the 20th Judicial Circuit is expected. Chambers added a chief of staff position in FY 2020, an additional legal services specialist in FY 2021, and an additional docket manager in FY 2024, which will aid staff in maintaining service levels. The chief of staff and docketing managers expect to deploy an online scheduling application in FY 2024 that will aid the legal community in scheduling of civil trials and motions.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: While civil caseloads are expected to rise, the Circuit Court expects to continue maintaining its FY 2024 service levels detailed above. The Circuit Court predicts that 3,800 civil cases and 1,700 criminal cases will be filed by FY 2025. The Circuit Court expects to continue to offer the services of the Adult Drug Court with a maximum capacity of 50 participants.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Maintain judicious, prompt, and efficient handling of cases by concluding cases.¹					
<i>Civil:</i>					
Total number of filed civil cases ²	3,819	3,566	3,582	3,800	3,800
Number of concealed handgun permit applications filed	6,236	3,459	4,043	6,200	6,200
Number of garnishments filed	146	482	779	600	600
Number of adoptions filed ³	43	76	63	100	100
Number of juvenile appeals filed ⁴	207	168	153	200	200
Number of civil files prepared for civil dockets ⁵	n/a	3,166	3,503	3,228	3,300
<i>Criminal:</i>					
Total number of filed criminal cases ⁶	1,661	1,557	1,620	1,700	1,700
Number of indictments	153	215	213	220	250
Number of waivers ⁷	229	200	162	200	225
Number of bench trials	231	193	128	250	250
Number of misdemeanor appeals	547	526	570	600	600
Number of criminal juvenile appeals	138	133	194	150	150
Number of capias/rules ⁸	363	290	353	300	300

¹ Data shown as n/a indicates a measure that does not have historical data.

² This measures the following: number of concealed handgun permit applications filed (each concealed handgun permit is a separate civil case), garnishments, juvenile appeals, adoptions filed, and the other civil cases not in these four categories.

³ These adoption cases were opened as new matters in the Circuit Court and were heard by the Circuit Court. Some adoption cases are handled and resolved at the lower court level while some adoption cases are processed by the Circuit Court.

⁴ These are the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court cases that are appealed to the Circuit Court.

⁵ This measure reflects the number of civil files that are reviewed by the legal specialists and prepared for the judges' review prior to the court hearing.

⁶ This measures the following: number of indictments, waivers, bench trials, misdemeanor appeals, criminal juvenile appeals, and capias/rules.

⁷ A waiver is an intentional, voluntary surrender of a known legal right, such as a waiver of the right to a jury trial.

⁸ This is a command from the court that orders a party to show why he/she has not carried out certain acts, or why they should not be carried out.



Courts: Circuit Court

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Number of criminal files prepared for criminal dockets ¹	n/a	2,590	2,151	2,600	2,600
<i>Civil and Criminal:</i>					
Number of motions for which legal memoranda are prepared ²	n/a	339	267	400	400
Number of hearings reviewed for attorney involvement ³	n/a	1,835	1,868	1,920	1,920
Number of daily orders reviewed by legal specialists ⁴	n/a	9,940	10,791	10,000	10,000
Number of cases scheduled ⁵	n/a	3,236	3,263	3,500	3,600

¹ This reflects the number of criminal files that are reviewed by the legal specialists and prepared for the judges' review prior to the court hearing.

² This reflects the number of motions for which a legal memorandum is written by a staff attorney. Frequently, numerous motions may be docketed for one hearing date, and one legal memorandum may contain analysis of numerous issues/motions.

³ This reflects the number of contested motions that are reviewed by the lead staff attorney to determine if a legal memorandum is warranted.

⁴ This reflects the amount of daily orders that the legal specialists review for accuracy and present to a judge prior to their signature.

⁵ This reflects the amount of cases that are scheduled by the docket manager and the senior legal services specialist.



Courts: General District Court

General District Court

What We Do: The General District Court, which is a state court of limited jurisdiction, has exclusive authority to hear civil cases with claims of \$4,500 or less; and shares authority with the Circuit Court to hear cases with claims between \$4,500 and \$25,000, and up to \$50,000 in civil cases for personal injury and wrongful death. This includes criminal, civil, traffic, and mental health hearings; arrests; arraignments; community relations; community service programs; protective orders; establishing court dates; and providing general information with regard to each of these types of cases. The General District Court handles traffic violations, hears minor criminal cases known as misdemeanors, and conducts preliminary hearings for more serious criminal cases called felonies. Additionally, the General District Court processes all paperwork filed for service and courtroom processes. The General District Court updates and issues many court processes required by law. Court staff provides information and assistance to members of the public at the General District Court's counter.

The 20th Judicial District includes three judges for the Loudoun County General District Court and one judge for Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties. The Virginia General Assembly appoints the judges for this Court for a term of six years. When the Courts Expansion Project is completed in FY 2024, the General District Court will transfer to the new courts building. The County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project provided for the construction of the new courts building. The County's CIP Project renovation of the Courts Complex will continue after the General District Court moves into its new building. The state provided an additional seven full-time positions for the General District Court for FY 2022.

The goal of the Mental Health Specialty Docket (MH Docket) of the General District Court is to increase public safety, reduce recidivism among high-risk individuals, divert individuals with serious mental illness from further progressing through the criminal justice system, and improve clinical outcomes for individuals with serious mental illness by connecting them with evidence-based treatment. Eligible individuals with serious mental illness are on the MH Docket, which is supported by one judge. This Specialty Docket is a collaborative effort between Community Corrections and MHSADS. Other partner agencies with the General District Court include LCSO, the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, and the Office of the Public Defender.

The Virginia Supreme Court approved Loudoun County's application to establish a Veterans Treatment Docket in November 2022; and the General District Court implemented the Veterans Treatment Docket to serve up to five participants in December 2022. The Veterans Treatment Docket is a Specialty Docket led by the General District Court within the existing structure of Virginia's court system that offers substance use and mental health treatment to eligible defendants. Loudoun's Specialty Docket will serve justice-involved veterans of United States military branches who have mental illness or cooccurring disorders. The initial maximum number of participants for the Veterans Treatment Docket will be five per year for the 12-month program.

The Veterans Treatment Docket adopts many elements from the existing MH Docket, including frequent court appearances and individualized treatment plans. Substance use and mental health treatment are made available to justice-involved veterans as an alternative to traditional case processing. Participants receive regular and intense supervision from a team across public agencies that monitors the defendant's treatment and provides resources tailored to the defendant's particular needs. This approach helps keep the defendant on track toward illness management and recovery, reducing reinvolverment in the criminal justice system. One element of the Veterans Treatment Docket model that sets it apart from the MH Docket model is the participation of veterans who serve as peer mentors.

The Veterans Treatment Docket provides support and services from a collaborative team consisting of the following federal, state, and County agencies: Loudoun County's Department of Community Corrections, MHSADS, the General District Court, the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, LCSO, and the Office of the Public Defender; the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services.

Mandate Information: The County is required to provide the building and office space for the courtrooms and staff, as mandated by the Code of Virginia § 15.2-1638.



Courts: General District Court

Who Does It: Support staff is provided by the state and is employed by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The County provides a pay supplement to the state salary for the General District Court's support staff. The County also provides operating and maintenance funding to support the Court's operations.

Why We Do It: The services provided by the General District Court are an important component of the state's judicial system in Loudoun County. The General District Court provides residents access to the legal system to resolve civil and criminal cases within the jurisdiction of the General District Court.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: Current service level includes more than 19,000 civil cases, approximately 6,500 criminal cases, and approximately 34,000 traffic cases concluded. The current service level of nearly 3,700 requests for interpretation includes all languages. Current service level represents up to 25 MH Docket participants and up to five Veterans Treatment Docket participants.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: The recommended service level is not clear now, but staff is watching trends and projections of civil cases, criminal cases, and traffic cases. As the County's population growth stabilizes over time, staff anticipates that the demand for these services may change, but it is difficult to project since a variety of factors affect the General District Court's service demands.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Ensure that court cases are resolved promptly and efficiently by processing all court cases.					
Number of civil cases concluded	14,566	13,617	16,081	19,458	21,400
Number of criminal cases concluded	4,872	5,250	5,364	6,490	7,140
Number of defendant requests for interpretation	2,428	2,711	3,490	3,631	3,704
Number of traffic cases concluded	20,104	33,833	28,168	34,084	37,492



Courts: Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

What We Do: The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court is a state court which hears all juvenile traffic and delinquency misdemeanor and felony offenses; adult domestic-related criminal misdemeanor and felony cases; and civil matters involving child custody, visitation, and child/spousal support. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court maintains jurisdiction for future modifications and violations of all orders entered unless otherwise ordered. This Court also hears civil cases regarding juvenile abuse and neglect, foster care, Child in Need of Services (CHINS), consent to adopt, and juvenile and adult domestic-related protective orders. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Clerk's Office serves County residents and the participants of the judiciary system by providing all court records, information, and services in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Two judges are assigned to Loudoun County and one judge is assigned to Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties in the 20th Judicial District to serve in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. The Virginia General Assembly appoints the judges for this Court for a term of six years.

Mandate Information: The Code of Virginia § 15.2-1638 states that the County is responsible for providing and maintaining the building for the courthouse(s).

Who Does It: Loudoun County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court consists of ten support staff provided by the state and employed by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The County provides a 15 percent pay supplement to the state salary of this Court's support staff. The County provides operating and maintenance expenditures funding in support of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court's operations.

Why We Do It: The services provided by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court are an important component of the state's judicial system in Loudoun County. This Court provides residents access to the legal system to resolve civil and criminal cases within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court processes more than 13,000 new domestic relations cases and nearly 9,700 new juvenile cases each year. Most cases have multiple hearings.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court's caseloads are expected to continue rising in the coming years. To continue offering the same service levels, the Court will be asking the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide funding and support for a third full-time judge. With a third judge, the Court would also need to request that the state adds additional deputy clerk positions to continue offering the same standards of service currently offered. This Court's positions receive a 15 percent County salary supplement to their state salary.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Provide equitable access for juveniles and families in the judicial system for Loudoun County residents.					
Number of adult domestic relations cases	10,136	9,524	9,681	13,489	14,163
Number of juvenile cases	7,264	7,230	7,713	9,667	10,634
Number of protective orders	383	380	367	509	534
Number of involuntary commitments	6	13	28	9	9



Courts: Magistrates

Magistrates

What We Do: The Magistrates Office serves as an entry point to the criminal justice system and provides access to the court system 24 hours per day, seven days per week, all 365 days of the year. The Magistrates Office is open on weekends and holidays. The Magistrates Office provides services to the public, law enforcement, and other government agencies, including issuing arrest process and search warrants; admit to bail or commit to jail in accordance with the Code of Virginia; issuing warrants and subpoenas and civil processes and attachments; issuing Emergency Protective Orders; and issuing Emergency Custody Orders and Temporary Detention Orders for mental and medical emergencies. The Magistrates Office is responsible for the 20th Judicial District, which includes Fauquier, Loudoun, and Rappahannock Counties. Loudoun County Magistrates are authorized to issue processes within the fourth Magisterial Region, which includes three Judicial Districts – the 16th, 20th, and 26th. However, Loudoun Magistrates hear matters primarily in the 20th District.

Mandate Information: Section 19.2-33 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended in 1974, established the Magistrate System to replace the Office of the Justice of the Peace. Magistrates are vested with the same authority and duties and obligations previously vested in the Office of the Justice of the Peace. A Magistrate is required to be available to anyone seeking services of the office 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Who Does It: These services are delivered by one Chief Magistrate and up to nine Magistrates allotted for the Office, who are state employees of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The County provides the building for the Magistrates Office's operations, and supports a portion of the Magistrates Office's operating budget. The County also provides a pay supplement to the state salary of Magistrates who were hired before July 1, 2008. One Magistrate currently qualifies for and receives the County supplement. When that Magistrate terminates employment, the County will no longer pay supplements to Magistrates. Local jurisdictions are prohibited by the state from providing pay supplements to Magistrates hired after June 30, 2008.

Why We Do It: Not only are the services provided by the Magistrates Office available to anyone at any time of the day or night, but these services are also provided in time-sensitive, high-pressure situations. Victims of crimes have immediate access to petition for Emergency Protective Orders and criminal processes. Relatives, acquaintances, and mental health and medical professionals aware of an individual experiencing a mental health or medical crisis have immediate access to Emergency Custody Orders and Temporary Detention Orders to be issued by a Magistrate in order to authorize life-saving services and treatment. The central components to almost all processes and services provided by a Magistrate include preserving the safety of the public, while ensuring the due process and rights of those individuals subject to the orders and processes issued by a Magistrate in the County and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: Current service level involves issuing more than 22,000 processes, which include arrest warrants, summonses, bonds, search warrants, subpoenas, emergency mental and medical custody orders, temporary mental and medical detention orders, Emergency Protective Orders, and other civil processes. Since FY 2020, the number of processes has increased. The number of Magistrate positions provided by the state has remained relatively the same for the 20th Judicial District from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: The recommended service level is not clear now, but the Magistrates Office is watching trends and projections. It is difficult to determine the impact of population stabilization on the Magistrates Office in the future since a variety of variables affect the workload, including the crime rate.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Provide judicial services and accomplish statutory responsibilities.					
Number of processes issued ¹	19,274	21,263	22,544	22,544	22,544

¹ Processes include arrest warrants, summonses, bonds, search warrants, subpoenas, emergency mental and medical custody orders, temporary mental and medical detention orders, Emergency Protective Orders, and other civil processes.

